



Questions and Answers about the Topeka Shiner



1) What is a Topeka shiner?

The Topeka shiner is a small minnow, normally less than 3 inches long. It is silvery-green with a distinct dark stripe preceding the dorsal fin and a dusky stripe along the entire length of the fish. The scales above this line are outlined with dark pigment, appearing cross-hatched, while the scales below this line have no pigment, appearing silvery-white in color.

2) What is the range of the Topeka shiner?

The Topeka shiner's historic range included parts of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota. It is still present in these states, but exists only in small, isolated populations in a significant portion of its current range.

3) Where do Topeka shiners live?

Topeka shiners live in small to mid-size prairie streams in the central United States where they are usually found in pool and run areas. Suitable streams tend to have good water quality and cool to moderate temperatures. Many of these streams have year-round flow, although some may become dry during summer or periods of prolonged drought. Occasionally, Topeka shiners are found in larger streams that are downstream of large populations. In Iowa, Minnesota, and portions of South Dakota, Topeka shiners also live in oxbows and off-channel pools.

4) Why is the Topeka shiner declining?

The Topeka shiner was once a common fish throughout its range but its presence has declined by about 70 percent at known collection sites during the last 40 to 50 years. Habitat destruction, sedimentation, and changes in water quality are thought to have caused the population decline. Also, the creation of impoundments on small prairie streams that were stocked with predaceous fish like the largemouth reduced Topeka shiner numbers.

5) What activities harm Topeka shiner habitat?

- , development and degradation of streams
- , in-stream gravel mining
- , changes in the stream hydrology
- , stream channelization projects
- , dam construction and development
- , destruction of off-channel habitats, such as oxbows

6) What is being done to protect the Topeka shiner?

Measures to protect the Topeka shiner include:

Listing: The Topeka shiner is listed as an endangered species throughout its range (parts of Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota).

Recovery Plans: The Service is developing a recovery plan that describes and prioritizes actions necessary to conserve the Topeka shiner.

Research: Several university and private researchers and Federal and State biologists are researching the needs of the Topeka shiner. The results of their studies will help us manage the species and its habitat.

Management and Habitat Protection: State and private organizations are working to create protection and management plans to ensure the recovery of the fish. The state of Missouri has developed a comprehensive management plan, which focuses efforts on conserving Topeka shiners in the state. In Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources and the Service have cooperated to develop a list of Best Management Practices for projects that take place in and along streams occupied by Topeka shiners. South Dakota has completed a Topeka shiner State Management Plan. In Kansas, the Topeka shiner is State-listed as a threatened species and the State has designated its own critical habitat for the species.

7) What protection does the Topeka shiner currently receive as a listed species?

The ESA prohibits the import, export, or interstate or foreign sale of protected animals and plants without a special permit. Under the ESA, take means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

The ESA requires Federal agencies to consult with the Service to conserve listed species and ensure that any activity they fund, authorize, or carry out will not jeopardize the continued survival and recovery of a listed species or destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat. The ESA also directs all Federal agencies to use their existing authorities to develop and carry out programs to conserve endangered and threatened species.

The Service may issue permits for activities that are otherwise prohibited under the ESA, if these activities are for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species, or for take that is incidental to otherwise lawful activities.

8) What can I do to conserve Topeka shiners?

There are a number of things that landowners and others can do to conserve Topeka shiners, including:

- , restoring stream habitats
- , placing vegetated buffers along streams (e.g., by managing livestock access to streambanks)
- , revegetating exposed, eroding banks
- , conserving soil throughout watersheds
- , avoiding or reducing direct impacts to streams and oxbows

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and State conservation agencies can assist landowners with the funding and implementation of projects to conserve Topeka shiners and their stream habitats.

9) Where can I get more information on the Topeka Shiner and critical habitat?

For general information on Topeka shiners and the designation of critical habitat contact Vernon Tabor at the Kansas Ecological Services Field Office, at the above address; telephone 785/539-3474; facsimile 785/539-8567.

For local information on Topeka shiners in your state, contact one of the Service field offices below:

Columbia, Missouri Ecological Services Field Office
101 Park Deville Dr., Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203
tel: 573/234-2132

Rock Island, Illinois Ecological Services Field Office (for Iowa information)
4469 48th Avenue Court
Rock Island, IL 61201
tel: 309/793-5800

Phil Delphey
Twin Cities, Minnesota Ecological Services Field Office
4101 East 80th Street
Bloomington, MN 55425
tel: 612/725-3548 ext. 206